Creation of Ombudsman for telecom sector

912. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been proposed by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India to create an Ombudsman for telecom sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the mechanism to address issues in the telecom sector without having to go to courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. TRAI in August 2004 had recommended for establishment an office of Ombudsman in the telecom sector to handle and investigate complaints within a time frame. The Government had not accepted the said recommendation after consideration.

(c) A well defined mechanism to address complaints/grievances from consumers of telecom sector exists in Department of Telecom (DoT) and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) *i.e.* Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) which *inter-alia* includes Public Grievance Cell and holding of Telephone Adalats by public sector units. Instructions have been issued for two State grievance redressal mechanisms by private operators.

Rural tele-density

913. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority has submitted recommendations for augmenting rural tele-density;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a huge mismatch between urban tele-density and rural tele-density; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken to correct the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD) (a) Yes, Sir.